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UNCLAS HALIFAX 000258

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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TAGS: EWWT ASEC ETRD PINS PTER CA

SUBJECT: HALIFAX PORT SECURITY CONTINUES TO TIGHTEN

REF: (A) 04 HALIFAX 134 (B) 03 HALIFAX 349

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

¶1. (U) While Ottawa has yet to follow through on its May 7 pledge of federal funding for Canadian Marine Facility Security, the Port of Halifax has ambitiously pressed forward with a series of new security measures using its own funding. These measures place the Port in the forefront of Canadian maritime security and on a par with its stateside counterparts. The Port of Halifax receives roughly 200,000 cruise ship passengers a year - 95 percent U.S. citizens - and transships over 4 million tons of containerized cargo a year - a significant percentage destined for U.S. markets.

¶2. (SBU) In a recent conversation, Port of Halifax Vice President for Operations and Security George Malec and newly-hired manager of Marine Security Gord Helm, discussed current and ongoing efforts to enhance security at the Port of Halifax. All efforts are being funded out of the Port's own operating budget. The Port has met IMO ISPS Code requirements and is currently undergoing certification by Transport Canada for the more stringent Canadian Marine Transportation Security Act - on a par with U.S. standards under the Marine Transportation Security Act.

¶3. (SBU) Passenger: The passenger (cruise ship) facilities of the Port are fenced off with camera surveillance. To enter or exit the secure area alongside cruise ships, passengers must present both id cards and boarding passes. Trucks with provisions are now prohibited from pulling up alongside ships. There is also a 24-hour police presence of at least two officers. Malec described this situation as unique for a Canadian port. Other ports, he stated, rely on PILT (policing in lieu of taxation), which provides no-charge police protection on an-on-call, as-available basis. Halifax, on the other hand, pays for a constant police presence and, as they are police, allows for an armed presence who can respond with deadly force if needed.

¶4. (SBU) Container: Halifax Port also pays for a constant police presence at its two cargo terminals. No containers are allowed to leave the facilities without the papers being checked by an officer. (This procedure was implemented following the disappearance of a targeted cargo container this past summer.) In addition, the Port is in discussions with Transport Canada - its supervisory body - over its plan to acquire radiation ion detection units for each of the cargo terminal piers. The goal is that, once implemented, no container will leave the port without being previously scanned.

¶5. (SBU) General: The Port has purchased an all-weather patrol boat, which has been turned over to the police for use. The boat is identical to boats used by DND, to provide for interoperability. The police are already manning the boat and undergoing final marine certifications. Both Malec and Marine Security Director Helm described cooperation between the port, coast guard, and navy as excellent. Helm, a former naval officer, is in the process of drafting an operations and safety plan for the harbor, to further enhance the cooperation. Looking forward, they discussed the soon-to-begin process of security clearances for all port employees. Background checks will be conducted by CSIS and the information forwarded by Transport Canada to Port authorities for clearance decisions.

¶6. (SBU) Malec, in particular, stressed the level of cooperation between the Port and stateside authorities. Malec himself spent a large part of the past summer in visits with officials of the ports in New York, Boston, and Baltimore. Malec spoke with approval of the recently-formed Nova Scotia association of small ports, (Sydney, Pictou, Parrsboro, Sheet Harbor, Shelburne, and Yarmouth) saying Halifax would be happy to consult and provide advice, but could offer no funding. Port security in Nova Scotia, he said, is only as strong as the weakest of the various ports' security.

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